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SEPTEMBER WEATHER AND CROPS

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, October 11, 1933.

How do you do folks:-

Following the general trend of the weather for a long time, September was warmer than normal in nearly all States. In fact, when the entire country is considered, there hasn't been a single month that could be classed as cool for the season since last April. September was slightly cooler than normal in the Pacific States and had seasonable warmth in New England and New York, but practically everywhere from the Appalachians to the Rocky Mountains the temperature averaged from 4° to 8° higher than normal.

September, occasionally, is a critical month with regard to untimely frosts that do severe damage to late summer crops, but this year temperatures as low as freezing were reported from first-order Weather Bureau stations only at points in Vermont and over a relatively small area of the Northwest. The lowest reported was 20° at Havre, Montana. In years past, temperatures as low as 9° below zero have occurred in September in some of our Northwestern States, and below freezing has been known as far south as Alabama and Arkansas.

Soon after the beginning of October there was a sharp reaction to cooler weather from the Great Plains States eastward, and the past week was abnormally cool. No unusually low temperatures for the season occurred, however, and a general freeze has not yet extended as far south as it does in an average year. October temperatures usually are pleasant, but, at times, some very cold weather occurs in this month. Record October lows in several Western and Northwestern States range from 20° below zero to more than 30° below. The highest temperature ever recorded in the United States in October was 117° in Arizona in 1896.

Because of the general warmth of the growing season this year, summer crops developed rapidly and matured early, so that there is now practically no danger from frost. Corn has ripened everywhere, except the late crop in the South and a few local very backward sections in the main producing area. Cutting is finished, or is well along, where this method of harvest is practised, and picking is in full swing in much of the premier corn State - Iowa. The cotton crop is maturing unusually early, with picking practically completed in the southern part of the belt and well along in the northern cotton districts. The weather has especially favored this crop during most of the growing season, and recently ideal conditions have prevailed for picking and ginning; the past week was entirely rainless over practically the whole belt.

With regard to rainfall and the soil moisture situation, conditions at the present time are far from satisfactory when the entire country is considered. The Ohio Valley and western Lake Region, especially the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, had a harmful shortage of rainfall during the summer, but in recent weeks the droughty conditions in these States have been relieved, and the soil is now in good shape for germination and early growth of winter wheat; in fact, a considerable part of Michigan has now swung to the other extreme, with too much rain causing standing water in many fields. Also the

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Northeast, from New England to the Potomac Valley, is mostly in good shape with regard to soil moisture, and the same may be said for most parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa.

On the other hand, severe drought centers in the northern Great Plains, especially the Dakotas and much of Minnesota; also, because of scanty rainfall during recent weeks, a considerable area in the Southwest has become too dry for satisfactory germination and growth of winter wheat, especially in southwestern Kansas. The wheat area of the Pacific Northwest is now too dry, and rains have not, as yet, favored south Pacific districts. The Southern States rather generally need rain for plowing and seeding, and for fall truck and pastures. Thus, while large, important agricultural areas are now favorably supplied with moisture, many others, widely scattered, but extensive, need rain.

Considering the States east of the Rocky Mountains, the most critical moisture condition is now in the Northwest, substantially the area known as the Spring Wheat Belt, in which rainfall has been deficient for a long time. For example, in South Dakota, only two years since 1923 have had as much as normal rainfall. In North Dakota, this makes the fourth Year in succession with deficient moisture, and the past summer was extremely dry. The record for Bismarck is typical of prevailing conditions. It shows only 65 percent of normal rainfall for 1933 up to and including September, and this follows three droughty years in succession. As a result of the severe long-continued drought, subsoil moisture in the Spring Wheat Belt has been depleted to such an extent that abundant rains will be necessary next spring for a satisfactory yield of spring wheat in 1934.